

CPS communication - email from Rebecca Lawrence, CEO of the CPS

Sent on behalf of Rebecca Lawrence, CPS Chief Executive Officer

Dear all

Following the Prime Minister's statement last night announcing further measures necessary to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak, the CPS has discussed with colleagues in HMCTS which types of cases should be considered urgent, and therefore should proceed.

The Prime Minister was clear that further restrictions on movement and personal contact are now vital to slow the spread of the disease. Following that clear direction, we have set out the following position, and have notified HMCTS of our intention to proceed on this basis at this time.

In the Crown Court, we will continue to support the 35 trials which are currently ongoing, on the basis that the SPJ's guidance on a safe environment is observed.

In the Magistrates' courts, we will support the following types of case only, which constitute urgent work:

1. Overnight custody cases in the Magistrates' Court
2. Cases with CTLs that need to be extended;
3. Breach of court bail;
4. Interim custody appearances and bail applications.

As many of those hearings as possible should be carried out by remote links.

This is a very fast-moving situation, and we will continue to review the impact of these measures, and how they are operating in practice, with criminal justice partners. Further refinement to our position may be made in the coming days.

We continue to take active steps to reduce physical appearances at court to an absolute minimum, with public safety uppermost in our minds.

Separately, we are well aware of the financial difficulties being faced by many working in the criminal justice system as a direct result of this emergency. In recognition of the challenges, in the coming days, the CPS will bring forward proposals for revised payment arrangements for work done prior to the conclusion of a case.

Thank you for your continued support.

Rebecca Lawrence